PLACE

Discover Your Legislature Series

Legislative Assembly of
British Columbia
Victoria
British Columbia
V8V 1X4

Contents

HISTORY 1

1858 — Colonial Administration Buildings — "The Birdcages" 1

1892 — The Competition 1

1893 — Francis M. Rattenbury 2

1893-1898 — Construction 2

1913-1915 — Additions 3

1915-1972 — Accommodating Change 3

1973 — Restoration and Renovation 4

BUILDING TOUR 5

Exterior 5

Building Features 5

Legislative Precinct 5

Cenotaph 6

Queen Victoria 6

Douglas Obelisk 6

Premier's Rose Garden 7

Sequoia Tree 7

Fountain 7

Flagpole 7

Cedar Tree 8

Knowledge Totem Pole 8

Armouries Drill Hall 8

Centre Fountain 8

Confederation Garden Park 9

Interior 9

Design and Floor Plan 9

Memorial Rotunda and Entrance to the Legislative Chamber 10

Legislative Chamber 10

Bar of the House 10

Speaker's Chair 11

Members' Desks 11

Clerk's Table 12

Mace 13

Public Gallery 14

Press Gallery 14

Architectural Details 15

Hansard Facilities 15

Other Areas of the Parliament Buildings 17

Architectural Details 17

Committee Rooms 17

Offices 17

Legislative Library 18

104-05617/

HISTORY

1858 — COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDINGS — "THE BIRDCAGES"

The Fraser River gold rush of 1858 transformed Victoria. Built as a Hudson's Bay Company fort and based on the fur trade, Victoria became the hub for tens of thousands travelling from San Francisco and beyond to the gold fields of B.C.'s interior. The gold rush also spurred the British government to formally claim British sovereignty over the Pacific Northwest by establishing the mainland Crown Colony of British Columbia. James Douglas, former Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company in Victoria, became the colonial Governor of both Vancouver Island and British Columbia in 1859 when the Hudson's Bay Company charter for the territory expired.

Douglas recognized the need for administrative buildings adequate for the new colony. He also supported the choice of a site on Crown land south of James Bay, the location of the present Parliament Buildings. Although somewhat removed from the town, a bridge across James Bay (where the causeway in front of the Empress Hotel is now) improved access.

The group of Colonial Administrative Buildings, begun in 1859, was described in the press as a "mixed style of architecture, the latest fashion for Chinese pagoda, Swiss-cottage and Italian-villa fancy birdcages." (*Victoria Gazette,* June 23, 1859.)

The Birdcages included the first purpose-built Parliament House, which served as the home for B.C.'s Legislative Assembly and government offices until the present Parliament Buildings were completed. This building was relocated to make room for the present Parliament Buildings. The original Chamber, the last of the Birdcages to survive, served as a mineral museum for the Department of Mines until it burned down in 1957. This was not long after the government had recognized the heritage value of the building and made a commitment to relocate and preserve it.

1892 — THE COMPETITION

After 30 years it was generally recognized that the Birdcages were no longer adequate. Too small for the growing province, they were difficult to heat, and their quaint design was increasingly out of favour. "Mean and insignificant public buildings are outward and visible signs of a sordid, narrow-minded and uncultivated State or Province. Visitors are sure to judge the whole people by the buildings they erect for

public uses. Those buildings ought to be handsome as well as commodious." (Victoria *Colonist*, March 16, 1983.) The idea of a new, substantial building was also supported by those in Victoria who feared that the provincial capital might relocate to New Westminster.

The economic depression of the early 1890s was an added impetus for a major public works project. The jobs were badly needed. In 1892 a competition was held to select a design for new Parliament Buildings, which were to include an administrative building, a Legislative Assembly building (including space for a library), a government printing office building and a land registry building.

Sixty-five sets of drawings were submitted by architects from all over Canada and the United States. From a short list of five finalists, a government-appointed committee of two non-competing architects from Ontario selected Francis Mawson Rattenbury, who had recently arrived in Vancouver from Britain.

1893 — FRANCIS M. RATTENBURY

Francis M. Rattenbury was born in Leeds, England in 1867. He articled with his uncle's architectural firm in England for five years, and arrived in Vancouver in 1892. In less than a year, he had entered and won the competition for the design of the Parliament Buildings. Just 25 years old, it was his first major commission.

During the construction of the Parliament Buildings, Rattenbury fought to maintain the integrity of his original design. He strongly opposed the use of the East Annex as the provincial museum rather than, as planned, the land registry office. He was also adamant that real marble, not an imitation, be used in the Chamber. In later years, however, he was thrilled to discover a craftsman who could successfully create a plaster imitation of marble, and he did not object to the pillars in the library rotunda being done this way for reasons of economy.

With the success of the Parliament Buildings, Rattenbury went on to design many well-known public buildings in B.C. These include the Empress Hotel, the CPR Marine Terminal (now housing the Royal London Wax Museum), the Crystal Garden (with P.L. James) and the courthouses in Nanaimo and Vancouver (now the Vancouver Art Gallery).

1893-1898 — CONSTRUCTION

The original budget for the project was set at $500,000. At the time, this was one-third of the province's entire annual revenue. Due to the challenges of a project of this size, including disputes with contractors and work stoppages, the total came to just over $900,000. The first load of stone had to be returned

because Rattenbury realized it would be too dark for the north-facing main façade. Although there was universal praise for the quality of the design and the workmanship, upon completion, opinion was divided. Most were understandably proud of the magnificent new building overlooking the harbour. Others saw it as a wasteful extravagance at a time when the economy was beginning to weaken again. Skeptics could not imagine that there would ever be enough people in B.C.'s government to fill the many empty corridors of the new building.

1913-1915 — ADDITIONS

By 1912, the provincial economy had regained its strength, and Rattenbury was commissioned to design an addition consisting of two wings of offices and the Legislative Library building to the south of the main block.

Using the same stone and a fairly consistent architectural style, the three additions fit quite well with the main block. The library wing, standing largely free of the south side, gave Rattenbury an opportunity for more ornamentation than the rest of the building. The exterior features 14 statues* of famous British Columbians and six medallions of great literary figures. The rotunda of the library, with the exception of the scagliola (imitation marble) columns, is lined with marble.

Rattenbury defended the $1.2 million cost of the three additions by pointing out that the floor area was almost equal to the original building and that the quality of construction and materials was much higher.

1915-1972 — ACCOMMODATING CHANGE

Although the additions of 1915 were the last major construction done on the Parliament Buildings, in a sense the buildings were never finished. Much of the interior space was never completed as Rattenbury had intended. Interior rooms and corridors were left undecorated. Several rooms intended for offices were unfinished and suitable only for use as storage space. The murals by George H. Southwell in the lower rotunda, donated by Provincial Secretary S.L. Howe, weren't completed until 1933, and the paintings on canvas beneath the main dome were painted in 1935, but weren't installed until 1952. Rattenbury had intended to put murals on the walls of the Chamber, but this was never done. On a more practical level, the original buildings were designed without proper wiring for modern electrical lighting and office equipment. Ventilation and natural lighting was inadequate in some areas. The buildings were also very poorly equipped with washroom facilities.

As for its use, Rattenbury had designed the building as the home of the Legislative Assembly and the government administration. As the number of ministries and the number of MLAs grew, the building became home to ever more ministry staff, cabinet ministers and MLAs. A shortage of space meant that some cabinet ministers' offices weren't even located in the Parliament Buildings. Crowding led to the use of some corridors as office space, so it became difficult to move around the building. The changes made to accommodate so many people and unforeseen uses altered the building ever further from Rattenbury's original intentions.

1973 — RESTORATION AND RENOVATION

After 70 years without regular improvements or renovations, the Parliament Buildings had deteriorated noticeably. With leaking roofs, rotting foundation timbers and an antiquated electrical system, the building was showing its age. Inside, years of insensitive alterations such as plywood partitions or modern light fixtures had gradually eroded or replaced much of Rattenbury's design. Worn linoleum covered ceramic floor tiles. Numerous layers of paint dulled the fine detail of the ornamental plaster and hid the original interior colour scheme.

In 1972 the renovation and restoration of the buildings was done to make the best use of all space. In part, this was due to parliamentary reforms that greatly changed the working life of MLAs. Until this time, backbench MLAs and opposition members had no permanent offices and were expected to vacate the building to make room for ministry staff between the relatively brief sittings. The government extended the length of sessions, and the position of MLA became a full-time job. Members needed a year-round office in Victoria and in their home constituency.

The renovation and restoration had to create adequate workspace for every Member of the Legislative Assembly, all government ministers and support staff. All government employees not directly connected with the Legislative Assembly were relocated. These changes required altering the use of many parts of the buildings. However, these alterations were designed in keeping with the original building and done with historically appropriate materials.

The restoration and renovation project, supervised by Architect Alan Hodgson, took over a decade. Every effort was made to use original or historically appropriate materials to return the buildings to their former glory. For example, each of the hundreds of stained- and leaded-glass panels were removed, restored and replaced. The Diamond Jubilee window, once thought destroyed, was recovered, repaired and placed in the east side of the Reception Hall.

At a time when the need to sensitively restore historic buildings was just beginning to gain wide acceptance, the commitment by two different governments to spend over $40 million to restore and renovate the Parliament Buildings is remarkable. For thousands of British Columbians and other visitors, the beauty of Rattenbury's original vision can be seen throughout the revitalized buildings.

BUILDING TOUR

EXTERIOR

Building Features

The style of the Parliament Buildings has been described as "free classical," renaissance and Romanesque. Rattenbury did not adhere to a strict revival of a specific historical architectural style. However, he used the building to show off the raw materials from B.C. The rough-hewn Haddington Island stone, the Nelson Island granite used in the foundation and front stairs, the Jervis Inlet slate roof (replaced by Pittsburgh slate during the restoration) and the copper domes display the abundant natural resources that were one of the great strengths of such a young province.

A large part of the success of Rattenbury's design is due to its grand scale. Rattenbury's sketch for the competition, unlike those of the other finalists, shows a view from across the harbour. The impressive 500-foot long front façade appears continuous from a distance because Rattenbury chose to join the East and West Annexes to the main building with colonnades.

The dome over the entrance to the Chamber centres the mass of the long building. Rattenbury chose to use an octagonal renaissance-style dome, which distinguishes the Parliament Buildings from the many circular neo-classical domes used on American state and federal capitols.

Legislative Precinct

The legislative precinct includes not only the immediate grounds of the Parliament Buildings but also nearby provincial government lands and buildings.

As the political centre of British Columbia, the area has numerous important historical markers and landmarks of historical interest.

Although Francis Rattenbury had hoped that the many trees in the area in front of the Parliament Buildings he designed would be spared, they were cleared shortly after the building was completed.

The lawn of the Parliament Buildings has become the most important gathering place in the province for political and social demonstrations, on every imaginable issue. Although there are regulations against putting up tents or camping on the lawns, peaceful protests take place with few restrictions.

The lawn is also a popular gathering place for celebrations and special occasions such as royal visits. Performances such as the Commonwealth Games Harbour Festival and the annual Symphony Splash concert by the Victoria Symphony attract huge audiences to the lawn of the Parliament Buildings.

Cenotaph

This War Memorial to the Unknown Soldier, unveiled by Lieutenant-Governor W.C. Nichol in 1925, commemorates the unknown soldiers of World War I, World War II and the Korean War. It was largely funded by public donations to the Victoria war memorial fund. The bronze statue is by Vernon and Sidney March of Farnborough, Kent, who later created the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

Queen Victoria

Premier Richard McBride commissioned the statue of Queen Victoria in 1912 from British artist Albert Bruce-Joy. The bronze statue stands at 4 metres (13 feet) — Queen Victoria was actually just under five feet tall — and is based on a portrait by Winterhalter that now hangs in Buckingham Palace. Completed and unveiled in Britain in 1914, shipping was delayed until after the First World War.

The granite foundation stone was laid in 1919 by the Prince of Wales. The pedestal is blue Swedish marble. The statue itself was unveiled in 1921 by Canada's Governor General, the Duke of Devonshire.

The statue was intended to stand directly in front of the main entrance in place of the central fountain, with the Queen facing the Parliament Buildings and the southern light. Instead, it was placed facing the weaker northern light and immediately adjacent to Belleville Street. The sculptor was so upset that anyone wanting to get a good look at the sculpture would have to stand in the "roadway and be run over by a motorcar or fall backwards into the water" that he refused to attend the unveiling.

Douglas Obelisk

Sir James Douglas, the "Father of British Columbia" was the founder and Chief Factor of Fort Victoria for the Hudson's Bay Company and later became the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Crown Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, from 1851 to 1864. He was largely responsible for ensuring that both the Island and mainland of B.C. remained British after the withdrawal of the Hudson's Bay Company.

In gratitude for his service, the people of B.C. erected this eight-metre (27-foot) obelisk in 1881. It is made of native B.C. marble from Beaver Cove, by Mortimer and Reid.

Premier's Rose Garden

Located to the west of the buildings, the Premier's Rose Garden was designed by Public Works Chief Architect Henry Whittaker. It was created in 1935-36, largely as a relief project for unemployed men during the Great Depression.

Sequoia Tree

Believed to have been planted in the 1860s, this landmark tree rises to over 30 metres (100 feet) and is the official provincial Christmas tree.

Fountain

This fountain, designed by Robert Savery, celebrates the union of the colonies and territories that joined to form British Columbia in 1862. The five bronze animals depicted are historic and geographically symbolic.

The gulls and otter on the rock (centre) denote the approach from the sea.

Sea otters were the early foundation of the B.C. economy. The trade in sea otter furs led to the exploration and eventual settlement of the B.C. coast.

The eagle represents the Aboriginal societies on Vancouver Island, one of the two Crown Colonies.

The raven is the symbol of the Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii), one of the territories that was included in B.C.

The bear represents the interior Aboriginal societies and the mainland colony of British Columbia.

The wolf represents the Stikine territory.

Flagpole

The first flagpole in this location was placed in 1865. The current pole was erected in 1926 and stands at 51 metres (165 feet). It is made from an excellent specimen of Douglas fir, the single most important and valuable timber wood in British Columbia.

Cedar Tree

This western red cedar was planted in 1988 to commemorate the adoption of this species as the official tree of the province of British Columbia. A commercially valuable species, all parts of the western red cedar *(thuja plicata)* were used as raw materials for canoes, clothing, housing and innumerable other essential objects for the northwest coast Aboriginal peoples of B.C.

Knowledge Totem Pole

This pole was carved by Cicero August, a Coast Salish artist from Duncan. It was erected on February 2, 1990, during the Commonwealth Games held in Auckland, New Zealand. The pole was made to welcome visitors to Victoria for the next games, in 1994.

The pole refers to the oral traditions of the Aboriginal people of the northwest coast. Mr. August had the opportunity to explain the symbolism of the Knowledge Pole to Queen Elizabeth during the royal visit of 1994.

The top figure, the loon, represents "the teacher of the speakers" as well as an interpreter of all the Aboriginal languages spoken. The fisherman represents the traditional way of life of Aboriginal people. Below him, the bone player represents a non-verbal game that can be played by people who do not share the same language. The bottom figure, the frog, is from an old mountain story and also symbolizes a tear.

Armouries Drill Hall

The last of several 19th century military buildings in this location, the Armouries Drill Hall building was designed by William Ridgway-Wilson and completed in 1894. It was built for the 5th British Columbia Regiment of the Garrison Artillery, to be used both as a drill hall and as a social meeting place. The most notable soldier to parade in the building was General Sir Arthur W. Currie, who began as a gunner in Victoria and rose in rank to command the Canadian Corps in France during World War I. The building was turned over to the provincial government in 1921 and subsequently housed the provincial police department and the motor vehicle branch. It currently contains government offices.

Centre Fountain

The fountain in front of the main entrance to the Parliament Buildings was designed by the Victoria firm of Hooper and Watkins and manufactured by J.W. Fiske in New York in 1905. Originally 5.5 metres (18 feet) high, with four basins, it now consists of a single large basin set in a stone pool. It was supposed to be relocated to make room for the statue of Queen Victoria, but it never was.

Confederation Garden Park

Confederation Garden Park is located west of the Parliament Buildings and is a plaza featuring a natural stone wall with plaques from the provinces and territories of Canada. Created in 1967 in honour of the centennial of Canadian confederation, it was a gift from the Capital Improvement District Commission (now the Provincial Capital Commission).

The large fountain in the centre of the park includes a perpetual flame signifying the strength of Canadian unity. An eight foot long Centennial time capsule was placed beneath a one tone concrete lid under the plaza on Dec. 31, 1967. The capsule contains newspapers, magazines, records, film messages documenting the centennial year. It also hold messages from leading officials of the time to the citizens of B.C. in 2067, when the capsule is scheduled to be opened.

INTERIOR

Design and Floor Plan

Rattenbury's design is a success not only because of the grand scale and proportion of the exterior. Originally, the Parliament Buildings had two distinct roles: as the seat of democracy as embodied in the Legislative Assembly and as the centre of the day-to-day work of government. Rattenbury was able to combine these two very different functions in a complementary and practical way.

As the home of the Legislative Assembly, the building needs to serve as a symbol of the strength and tradition of parliamentary democracy. It also needs to provide an appropriate setting for the lawmaking activities of the Legislative Assembly.

Rattenbury's building is focused on the central rotunda. The main dome is directly over it, and the grand staircase under the main archway leads to it. The upper rotunda serves as the antechamber to the legislative Chamber. Its extraordinary decoration of marble and gilt plasterwork is matched only by the ornamentation in the Chamber itself. The dome, stairs and rotunda all lead us to the Chamber — and remind us of its primary importance.

The Parliament Buildings also serve as the seat of government. Although the terms of the architectural competition allowed for it, Rattenbury chose not to have a separate administrative building. Instead, he incorporated a functional office building for government within the symbolic and ceremonial parliamentary building.

In the original plan, the lower rotunda was intended as the central access point for all government services of the day. A citizen could go from here directly to any government department. Just as the upper rotunda leads directly to parliament, the lower rotunda was designed to lead directly to government. Likewise, just as Rattenbury wanted to use the finest decorative materials worthy of a parliamentary democracy, he was equally careful to make sure that the Parliament Buildings had the most modern facilities and conveniences of the day to ensure efficient government service to the public.

Memorial Rotunda and Entrance to the Legislative Chamber

The main staircase at the front of the Parliament Buildings leads through the ceremonial entrance directly to the Memorial Rotunda. This entrance is normally closed but is used by the Lieutenant-Governor for the opening of a new session of parliament.

In the centre of the exquisite octagonal Memorial Rotunda is an open circle surrounded by a ring of dark Tennessee marble. The walls are lined with two colours of Tennessee marble. Inside, the dome stretches upward to a height of 30.5 metres (100 feet), while the height from the main floor to the top of the figure of Captain Vancouver atop the dome is 39.6 metres (130 feet).

The *Daily Colonist* in 1898 described it as follows: "It gives one an idea of space and dignity and broadness, a fitting entrance to a legislative hall and an inspiration to the members."

The Memorial Rotunda gained its name because it is the site of several war memorials dedicated to those from Victoria and B.C. who gave their lives for Canada. A Book of Remembrance gives their names. The page is turned daily.

At the south end of the rotunda, also known as the Domical Hall, is the doorway with the "golden gates" of lacquered brass. This leads across the Members' Lobby to the entrance to the Chamber. The entrance is used by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Speaker and the Clerks of the House during the Speaker's procession at the beginning of every sitting. The Lieutenant-Governor also uses this entrance when in attendance.

Legislative Chamber

Bar of the House

As shown in the photo below, a brass rail, known as the Bar of the House, blocks entry to the Chamber. This barrier cannot be crossed by anyone who is not a Member of the Legislative Assembly. If the Speaker wants to address someone on behalf of the House, that person will be summoned to the Bar.

Orders to appear at the Bar of the House are rarely given, but they may occur if the House wishes to praise or congratulate an individual or, conversely, to interrogate someone who has been charged with contempt of the House.

In 1917 the secretary-treasurer of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway was summoned to the Bar and refused to answer questions about campaign contributions. He was taken into custody by the Sergeant-at-Arms and held for a month. He had a bed in the cabinet ministers' lounge and took his meals at the Empress, accompanied by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

There are several cases in B.C.'s past of journalists being summoned to the Bar for writings that were considered to be insulting to the House.*

In happier circumstances, provincial archivist Willard Ireland was called in 1954 to receive the old mace into his care when the new mace was put into use. In 1973 Ned DeBeck, long-serving Clerk of the House, was honoured by being called to the Bar on his 90th birthday, at which time he was told he had been appointed Queen's Counsel.

In 1998, a special sitting of the House marking the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Parliament Buildings included an address to the House by former MLA Mark Rose on behalf of all former MLAs. Later that same year Nisga'a Chief Dr. Joseph Gosnell addressed the House during the debates on the first modern-day treaty in B.C.

Speaker's Chair

In recognition of his or her authority, the Speaker oversees the Chamber from an impressive chair on a dais at the south end of the Chamber. The chair is carved from Indiana white oak. The twisted columns on either side are each surmounted by an Ionic capital. The canopy above the chair is carved of the same wood and features the provincial coat of arms. Large wrought-iron lamps grace each side of the canopy.

Traditionally, Speakers were entitled to keep the chair at the end of their service as Speaker. In B.C. this has not happened since the early 20th century.

Members' Desks

The House is divided into two double rows of desks on either side of the floor. Traditionally, the government sits to the Speaker's right, and the opposition sits on the other side.

This arrangement of seats originated in the Chapel of St. Stephen's at Westminster, where members sat on the chapel benches facing each other. As parliament and parties evolved, members with shared views took to sitting together and across from their opponents. St. Stephen's was the home of the British House of Commons until it burned down in 1834 and was replaced by the present Palace of Westminster.

St. Stephen's is also credited with another parliamentary custom: members bow to the Speaker's chair when entering the Chamber. An altar stood behind the Speaker's chair in St. Stephen's, and members bowed before it, according to ecclesiastical custom. Even after members stopped meeting in St. Stephen's, they continued the practice. It is now considered a mark of respect for the Speaker and the House.

In most parliaments, including British Columbia's, the desks of the government and opposition members are spaced two sword lengths apart. Historically, this was to ensure that no harm could be inflicted upon a member during a heated debate in the House. In modern times, weapons are no longer permitted in the House, but the two-sword-length spacing tradition continues.

The current desks, made of black walnut, are original. As the number of members in the House has increased from 36 in the 1894-98 session to the current 79, the desks have been packed ever more tightly. To make room for an increased number of seats in 1990, each desk was narrowed by 10 centimetres (4 inches).

Illustration: Re: May 14 Note: Photos of the House in different periods, showing how it has been reconfigured.

Clerk's Table

The Clerk of the House and Clerks Assistant (also referred to as table officers) sit at the Clerk's Table on the floor of the House, the business centre of the parliamentary process. They advise the Speaker and the members on proper parliamentary procedure.

When the House sits as Committee of the Whole, the mace is placed on a bracket below the Clerk's Table. The Chair of the Committee of the Whole sits at the Clerk's Table in the center chair normally occupied by the Clerk, and presides over the debate. The Speaker leaves the Chamber.

When documents are filed with the House, they are said to be "tabled."

The Clerk's Table has an electronic panel of lights that assists in monitoring the length of members' speeches to make sure that they stay within the procedural time limits. There is also a switch to ring the division bells that are heard throughout the Parliament Buildings to call the members into the Chamber for a vote. An ornate silver bell to signal the end of Question Period also resides on the Clerk's Table, as do the various House documents and reference texts required by the table officers.

Mace

The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for the care and custody of the mace, and carries it to lead the Speaker in the Speaker's Procession at the opening and closing of each day's sittings of the House. Centuries ago, the mace was the personal weapon of the Sergeant-at-Arms and also his badge of office and authority, displaying the royal insignia to people who could not read. In more modern times, the mace has become the symbol of the authority of the House itself, and it must be present on the Clerk's Table for the Legislative Assembly to conduct its business. Its presence signifies that the House is in full session, with the monarch's full knowledge and consent. It also represents the authority of the Speaker.

When the House is transformed into the Committee of the Whole House, the mace is moved to a position below the Clerk's Table.

Since British Columbia became a province of Canada in 1871, there have been three successive maces in the Legislative Assembly. The first was used from 1872 to 1897. It was made by Mr. C. Bunting in gilded, carved wood, with a carved crown and Grecian cross. The second mace was first used on February 10, 1898, at the opening of the newly completed Parliament Buildings, and was made of brass by Winslow Bros. of Chicago.

The present mace was adopted in 1954. It was entirely handmade by Jefferies & Co., Victoria silversmiths, from native British Columbia silver. It is plated with 24-carat gold and weighs 11 pounds. The traditional design has a long shaft topped by a deep bowl surmounted by a representation of St. Edward's crown and the royal cipher. The bowl bears the coats of arms of Canada and British Columbia and four embossed scenes depicting the province's forestry, fishing, agriculture and mining industries. These scenes are similar to the murals in the upper rotunda of the Parliament Buildings.

Public Gallery

The public galleries, the seats on either side of the House that overlook the Chamber, are open to all members of the public when the Legislative Assembly is in session. The public galleries can seat 166 people behind the elaborate bronze railings. The entrance to the public galleries is on the third floor. Many of the meetings of legislative committees may also be observed by the public in the committee rooms.

The tradition of public access to parliamentary proceedings is comparatively recent.

In the earliest days of the Westminster Parliament, members of the public were not allowed to witness debates. Until very recently, a member in Westminster could stop proceedings and have the public gallery cleared by the Sergeant-at-Arms by shouting "I spy strangers!" To this day, all persons who are not members, officers or staff of the House are referred to as strangers.

For many years, visitors to the public gallery in the Chamber needed an invitation from a sitting member. The public is now welcome any time the House is sitting, but there are rules of conduct established by the Speaker to ensure that no one disrupts the proceedings. Visitors are expected to be quiet and not wave, applaud or comment on debate. No note-taking, cameras or recording devices are permitted in the public or press galleries.

Press Gallery

The freedom of the press to publish reports of parliamentary debates and to comment on the actions of political leaders was won only after centuries of struggle in Great Britain. Until the 18th century, parliamentary debates took place in secrecy, since members feared that they might be arrested for treason if the King learned about criticism made of him in the legislative Chamber. However, the public demanded to be informed about legislative proceedings, and the press assumed its role as the eyes, ears and conscience of the people. Because of this history, the press are seated behind the Speaker in most Commonwealth parliaments: out of sight and, by tradition, out of mind. (There, they may take notes without being seen by the Speaker.)

Rattenbury's original plan for the Chamber did not include an area dedicated to members of the press. In the first session in the new Parliament Buildings, they sat in the public galleries. In the second session of 1899, the press were actually allowed to sit on the floor of the Chamber so that they could hear the members properly. Finally, a dedicated press gallery was built above and behind the Speaker's chair.

Literally, the press gallery is the area above the Speaker's chair where reporters sit while attending a legislative session. However, the term "press gallery" is most often used to refer to the group of political reporters who are based at the Parliament Buildings and cover the provincial and legislative news.

Their third-floor offices have the feel of a private club, rich in journalistic folklore and decorated with dozens of photographs of members. Press gallery members can now observe the debates of the House from the relative comfort of their offices by watching the live televised proceedings, broadcast throughout the province.

Currently the legislative press gallery has more than 40 members. Membership is open to professional journalists assigned to cover the Legislative Assembly and the provincial government.

Architectural Details

The Chamber is quite large, measuring 12-by-18 metres (40-by-60 feet), and contains many interesting architectural details. The walls are panelled with brown Italian marble and punctuated with 22 massive columns of green marble.

The columns support an ornate ceiling, trimmed with gold leaf and hosting three domed stained-glass skylights. The central white globe suspended from the ceiling houses the speakers for the sound amplification system.

Large wrought-iron electric lamps were hung in the Chamber in 1898. Over the decades, many were replaced by less attractive contemporary fixtures. When the Parliament Buildings were restored in 1973, replicas of the original iron light fixtures were installed. Additional lighting was also added to meet the requirements of the Hansard television cameras.

An intriguing feature of the Chamber is the plaster faces looking out at intervals from under the main ceiling moulding. Some sources suggest that these faces are of famous philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, whose wisdom Rattenbury hoped would influence the politicians under their watchful gaze. They are thought more likely to be anonymous representatives of the people keeping an eye on the legislators. The craftsmen who decorated the Chamber may well have arbitrarily created them.

Hansard Facilities

Hansard is the official report of debates of the Legislative Assembly. It is a "full report, in the first person, of all speakers alike, which, though not strictly verbatim, is substantially the verbatim report, with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected, but which on the other hand leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or illustrates the argument." That

statement of Hansard policy was written in 1907 for the U.K. Parliament in Westminster, and it continues to apply throughout the Commonwealth. The Canadian House of Commons has had a full Hansard report since 1880. B.C.'s Hansard began in 1970, but initially with no report of debate in either Committee of Supply (estimates) or Committee of the Whole (clause-by-clause debate of bills), and has been a full report since the beginning of the 30th parliament, in 1972.

The Hansard files are a transcript from a digital recording of the proceedings in the Chamber or in a committee meeting. These transcripts are available on the Legislative Assembly website* and are fully indexed by subject and speaker.

Hansard Television

As of the 1991 spring session, House proceedings have been televised live and in full and videotaped for the provincial archives. The Hansard television broadcast has captions that identify the member speaking and the business being transacted. Beginning in April 1994, the debates have been closed-captioned for the hearing-impaired.

Following the first sessional broadcast, using a temporary television system, construction of a permanent television centre began in September of 1991. An existing storage vault, located directly under the Chamber, underwent extensive renovation. Six cameras are installed in specially designed enclosures, two on either side of the Chamber and two at the end facing the Speaker's chair. The camera enclosures are fully recessed and unobtrusive, opening from behind to allow for maintenance even while the House is in session.

To ensure accuracy and cost-effectiveness, Hansard Television was designed to be as fully automated as possible. Robotic cameras are integrated with a microphone-selection system. A Hansard staff member sits at a computer tablet in a booth above the Chamber and selects the microphones of individual members as they are recognized (allowed to speak) by the Speaker. This causes the audio computer to turn a particular microphone on and adjust the volume for the member's voice. It then signals the video computer, which focuses the robotic cameras on that member.

The debates are recorded on Betacam SP tape, and VHS copies are made for members and officers of the House on request and for public viewing and archiving.

Other Areas of the Parliament Buildings

Architectural Details

Throughout the building, Rattenbury and his associates incorporated many architectural details. The paint scheme, stained glass, floor tiles, plaster details and wood mouldings all enrich the interior. The richness of the colour scheme, including gold and silver leaf, was revealed once years of institutional white and beige paint were removed. Rattenbury was assisted in the interior finish by Victor Moretti, who also executed the drawings for the additions completed in 1915.

Many of the interior windows of the building, used as screens, dividers and skylights, are of leaded or stained glass. The majority of the leaded glass was created by two Canadian firms, Henry Bloomfield and Sons of New Westminster and Joseph McCausland of Toronto. The painted and stained glass was largely the work of two British companies, Powell Bros. of Leeds and E.W. Morris and Sons of London.

Committee Rooms

The most notable feature of the committee rooms is their use of native woods of B.C. for the architectural woodwork. Rattenbury's original design included four such rooms: the Hemlock, Cedar, Maple and Pine Committee Rooms. The Pine and Hemlock Rooms were destroyed at some time, but were recreated during the restoration and renovation that began in 1972. The Hemlock Room features a series of painted panels designed by Aboriginal artists from throughout the province. During the renovation, the Oak, Birch and Douglas Fir Rooms were created. The largest of these, the Douglas Fir, serves as a location for meetings of the Committee of Supply, "Section A."

May 14 note: "The MLAs office as opposed to the Premier's and cabinet minister's offices and meeting rooms, should be the main focus here."

Offices

MLAs' Offices

The creation of private offices for every MLA was a major task of the 1972 restoration and renovation. Space formerly devoted to staff from various ministries was converted to provide adequate space for MLAs and their support staff. The East Annex underwent particularly extensive restoration. This included filling in a large hole in the second floor that had been created to allow for a two-storey atrium when the building was adapted for use as the provincial museum.

Premier's Office

Located on the first floor of the West Annex, the current Premier's office was created during the 1972-75 restoration and renovation. Its design is based on the existing ministerial offices in the main building, and it is unique in that the interior is done entirely in cherrywood. It also contains the original Premier's desk.

Cabinet Ministers' Offices and Meeting Room

Prior to the restoration and renovation of the Parliament Buildings that began in 1972, few cabinet ministers had offices there. Rattenbury had envisioned suites of rooms for each minister, and this was achieved in the restoration. Each minister's suite has a distinctive and unique pattern of moulding and wooden trim and ornamental plasterwork.

Cabinet Meeting Room — Second Floor, West Annex:

This room in the West Annex replaced the previous cabinet meeting room in the main building and was created during the restoration and renovation that began in 1972. With the growth in the number of cabinet ministers over time, the original room had become too crowded. It is worth noting that the plasterwork of the original room was recreated in this new room and is surrounded by a new border. This helps illustrate how much smaller the old cabinet meeting room was.

Legislative Library

The Legislative Library occupies its own wing of the Parliament Buildings, an addition to the original building that was completed in 1915.

The first Legislative Library was founded in 1863 to serve the colonial Legislative Assembly of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island. The early collection included material related to the history of British Columbia, which later became the British Columbia Archives. By 1893, R.E.Gosnell had been appointed the first permanent librarian.

The one room used for the library in the Parliament Buildings was totally inadequate for an institution intended to serve the Legislative Assembly and all British Columbians and to house the many valuable historical documents and artifacts of the library.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, Governor-General of Canada laid the foundation stone for the library wing in 1912, a time of relative prosperity in B.C. It was praised as the first "modern" building designed specifically to house a library in any of the provinces of Canada.

The library continues to provide reference and research services to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, their research staff, the officers of the House and legislative support staff. It no longer houses the British Columbia Archives, that moved to its own building in 1970.

The Legislative Library maintains a core collection of materials on political science, parliamentary procedure, law, public administration, economics and Canadian history. It also serves as the official depository library for British Columbia government publications and has extensive holdings of Canadian federal and provincial publications.

Interior

The library is located adjacent to the Speaker's corridor, just behind the legislative Chamber, on the second floor of the Parliament Buildings. As one proceeds down the hallway, the library rotunda and reference desk become increasingly visible, and there is growing anticipation about the splendour to be revealed. The library rotunda is three storeys high, with gallery openings on the second floor. It is finished in Italian Carrara marble and punctuated with eight giant columns, a perfect complement to the classic architectural features of the rest of the building. The walls are panelled in marble and the rotunda's impressive eight columns are made from scagliola, an Italian neo-classical revival of stone and plaster intended to imitate marble. One architectural critic humorously noted that the impression upon entering the library was "not that you've come to study, but that you have drowned in a Roman bathhouse." However, most visitors agree that the rotunda reflects the dramatic splendour and decadence of the late imperial age. One striking feature of the rotunda is the eight large heraldic beasts that peer down over librarians and library users.

The two reading rooms adjacent to the library rotunda are panelled in mahogany and decorated with elaborate wood carvings. The Members' Reading Room features a fine example of hand-carved limewood in the style of 17th century English sculptor Grinling Gibbons. They were carved for the library by H.H. Martyn & Co., of Cheltenham, England, also known as the "Cheltenham School."

The vast library collection is spread out over seven floors, accessed by the staff using stairways, a dumbwaiter and the second-oldest working elevator in Victoria. The oldest is reportedly at the former law courts building in Bastion Square, now the Maritime Museum of British Columbia.

Exterior

The east, west and south wing additions to the Parliament Buildings were completed in 1915. Like the original 1898 buildings, the additions were designed by F.M. Rattenbury. His first plans for the library's south wing called for an impressive chateau-style design, but this was thought to be too grandiose and

earned the disapproval of the Legislative Librarian, E.O.S. Scholefield. Although the final plans were a compromise, the library wing still emerged as the most ornate portion of the buildings. The addition of the three wings cost almost $1.2 million, considerably more than the $928,000 cost of the original buildings in 1898. However, little opposition was raised about the addition costs since the province was enjoying an economic boom at that time.

Among the library's interesting features are the portico entrance and the sculptures of historical and mythological figures adorning the outer walls. The portico entrance features the original gates from the pre-1915 south entrance to the Parliament Buildings. Rattenbury never intended this library entrance to be used. It was added primarily for architectural effect. Scholefield himself chose the historical and mythical figures represented in the sculptures adorning the exterior of the Library.

Visitors first notice the fourteen tall statutes 2.74 metres (9 feet) — that grace the exterior walls. Each one is connected in some way to British Columbia's early history. The female figures represent the arts of painting, music, sculpture and architecture. Six literary medallions depict Shakespeare, Homer, Dante, Socrates, Milton and Sophocles. Two craftsmen, Charles Marega and Bernard Carrier, sculpted these classical statues from the same Haddington Island stone used in the construction of the buildings.

The Exterior Statues:
Beginning on the east side and moving westward, the figures include:

Chief Maquinna, the Nootka chief who welcomed the first white explorers who landed on Vancouver Island in 1778.

Captain George Vancouver, the explorer who is credited with first circumnavigating Vancouver Island.

Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie, the first Chief Justice of British Columbia.

Dr. John McLoughlin, a Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Dr. J.S. Helmcken, an early Victoria surgeon and politician who helped negotiate British Columbia's terms of Confederation.

Captain James Cook, the British naval Captain who discovered and named Nootka Sound in 1778.

Sir James Douglas, the founder of Fort Victoria and Governor of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia.

Sir Frances Drake, the 16th-century explorer and the first Englishman in the North Pacific, in 1579.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the North West Company explorer who, in 1793, was the first white man to traverse the continent north of Mexico.

Simon Fraser, the early fur trader and explorer who followed the Fraser River to its mouth in 1808.

Lord Lytton, the British Colonial Secretary who created the mainland colony of British Columbia in 1858.

Sir Anthony Musgrave, British Columbia's first colonial Governor, who expedited the province's entry into Confederation in 1871.

David Thompson, an early 19th-century fur trader and explorer who charted British Columbia's interior.

Colonel R.C. Moody, a Commander of the Royal Engineers who surveyed many of the province's townsites.